

NEW YORK TIMES

29 SEPTEMBER 1982

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

U.S. to Increase Military Funds For Space Uses

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 28 — The Defense Department plans a swift increase in spending for military uses of space over the next five years, according to a senior official in the department.

The official, Edward C. Aldridge, Under Secretary of the Air Force, said in an interview that the Reagan Administration planned to increase spending for military uses of space by more than 10 percent each year after increases designed to account for inflation.

In contrast, the President has set the real growth rate for the overall military budget, after accounting for inflation, at an average of 7 percent a year. As part of the overall military budget, spending for military operations in space must be approved each year by Congress.

Mr. Aldridge, a key official in military and intelligence operations in space, said the reason for the higher rate in spending for military uses of space "is the need to find force multipliers — how can we better utilize our existing forces in more effective ways."

He said that American forces might be outnumbered in future conflicts and that, to multiply the effectiveness of those forces, they needed better infor-

mation, navigation aids, weather forecasts and communications, much of it provided by equipment based in space.

Plans for increased spending for military space operations follow the policy enunciated by Mr. Reagan in a Fourth of July speech this year when he placed a new emphasis on national security missions in space. The President, in a directive issued shortly after the space shuttle Columbia touched down from its fourth flight, said a priority was to "strengthen the security of the United States."

Military uses of space have rapidly expanded in the last two years. In the current fiscal year, which ends Thursday, funds for military space operations surpassed those for civilian uses in the budget of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for the first time.

The Defense Department's space budget for the current fiscal year was \$6.4 billion, as against \$5.5 billion for NASA. For the new fiscal year, the Administration has proposed \$8.5 billion for military space operations, against \$6.1 billion for NASA.

According to Mr. Aldridge's calculations, the Administration plans to increase the military space budget to about \$14 billion a year by the fiscal year 1988, not counting increases to make up for inflation. In comparison, the budget for the space agency, founded 24 years ago to coordinate United States efforts in space, projected only the modest growth it has experienced in recent years. The space agency's budget in the fiscal year 1978 was \$4 billion, as against \$5.5 billion in the current fiscal year.

The larger sums the Administration plans for military operations in space would go into the space shuttle, which is scheduled to become a primary vehicle for lifting military payloads into space; into developing antisatellite weapons, protecting American satellites from Soviet disruption and expanding the network of more than 40 military satellites now in operation and being used for intelligence, communications, navigation and mapping.

The Administration has proposed spending nearly \$20 billion over the next five years to expand and "harden" the communications network through which the President, the Secretary of Defense and senior military commanders control nuclear forces.

Many of those communication links are based in space and are vital to the United States strategy for fighting a protracted nuclear war if necessary.

Administration officials, while acknowledging the increased military uses of space, insist that space is not being "militarized." Mr. Aldridge and other officials asserted that the Administration had not approved plans for putting weapons into orbit.

Critics of the Administration have warned against the increased use of space by the military. The Center for Defense Information, which opposes excessive military expenditures, recently asserted, "The race to militarize space is rapidly outpacing the modest diplomatic efforts to control it."